

## **Water Quality Protection Division**

### **Mississippi Canyon 252 Oil Spill, Gulf of Mexico Region 6 Update**

**Subject:**                **Water Quality Division Update # 5**  
                              **Mississippi Canyon 252 Oil Spill, Gulf of Mexico**

**Date:**                    May 6, 2010

**Reporting Period:**   May 6, 2010 1300 – May 7, 2010 1300

## **Situation Status:**

### **Monitoring and Assessment**

- Providing input on subsurface dispersant toxicity cut-off plan.
- On a rotational basis, one staff member from Watershed Management and Monitoring and Assessment sections will be stationed on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor in the REOC to facilitate communication on water quality sampling needs.
- Continuing coordination with USGS in Houston program office on sampling efforts.
  - USGS planning to sample for PAHs, VOCs, TAL Metals, oil and grease, toxicity (possibly both water and sediment), BTEX, bacteria, and oil fingerprinting
- Continuing work to provide input to OW on water and sediment screening levels.
- USGS Water Science Centers across the Gulf are initiating efforts this week to sample surface water and shoreline ("swash zone") sediment for the analysis of PAHs, VOCs, metals, oil/grease, BTEX, oil "fingerprints", and toxicity. USGS and R6 have agreed to share sampling plans and will explore opportunities to share data and partner in future data collection efforts.

### **Drinking Water**

- Responded to information requests concerning drinking water quality.
- Received an updated map from the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (LDHH) that includes a larger area of Southeastern Louisiana. That map is attached. The public drinking water system data is current and accurate, however, LDHH does not maintain a data set for domestic wells (wells owned by individuals and not regulated by LDHH/EPA) so the accuracy cannot be guaranteed.
- Drinking water intakes, public drinking water wells, and domestic wells have not been impacted by the oil sheen and are not projected to be impacted by the oil spill.
- Neither EPA nor the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (LDHH) regulates industrial cooling or processing tank intakes nor do we regulate drinking water in offshore vessels or rigs.
- Continue to coordinate closely with the LDHH on all drinking water issues.

Drinking Water facilities in southeastern coastal parishes, Louisiana.

## Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act (CWPPRA)

- The NOAA forecast created on 5/5/10 at 2000 CDT for 5/6/10 at 1800 CDT shows that the oil slick will be just west of the mouth of Southwest Pass. The forecast does state that although the forecast illustrates beached oil along the SE portions of the Delta, to date there have been no observations of any beached oil in that portion of the delta because the oil is not crossing the Mississippi River convergence zone.
- The status of MR-09 and PO-27, two potentially impacted projects in the Delta and Chandeleur Islands, remains unchanged today due to limited information. If the oil does in fact move west of Southwest Pass, many more projects in the Barataria basin could be impacted. At this point there is not enough information to make any predictions as to which projects may suffer impacts in the Barataria basin.

## Coastal Habitat Impacts

The OW Human Health & Ecological Impact Team conducted the following activities:

- Initial meeting established the following goals:
  - Combine the initial draft ecological impacts documents that R6 and R4 developed into a combined analysis for internal agency use
  - Identify and prioritize key ecological impact issues for EPA managers
  - Identify long-term information needs
  - Contribute to a worst-case habitat and wildlife impact analysis
  - Draft and review an evolving set of ecological impact Q's and A's for EPA managers
  - Contribute to the development of FAQ's which may, at a later date, be made available to EPA public information officers.
- The first task, due by noon 5/7/10 is to review the OW document that combined the R6 & R4 impact analyses and to prepare an initial set of ecological Q's & A's, formatted as both sound bites and more detailed answers.

## Data Management – Mapping Efforts

- Coordination calls continue on data management.

- No new data needs were identified today for WQ GIS. Staff continues to review metadata on existing files.
- Field personnel will have conference call with National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) this afternoon to determine how EPA monitoring data will be supplied to NOAA's Environmental Response Management Application (**ERMA**) database.

## NPDES

- Coordinating with LDEQ and JIC on ways to provide information (including threat updates) and technical assistance to more vulnerable facilities with industrial water intakes (non-drinking water) being threatened by advancing oil slicks. Will also be gathering information on facility contingency plans already in place.
- Coast Guard Reservist Josh Waldmeier of the NPDES Permits and TMDLs Branch has been called to active duty and will be serving with the Coast Guard response units for 30-60 days starting May 7, 2010.